



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

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Net Zero

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Katherine Mackie
Chair
The Aldeburgh Society
47 Park Road
Aldeburgh
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Our ref: TOB2023/19827

Your ref:

3rd October 2023

Dear Katherine,

Thank you for your email of 13th September, about energy infrastructure in East Anglia. The Secretary of State is grateful to you for having taken the time to write. I have been asked to respond on her behalf.

The Government does not make planning applications or choose precise routes for energy transmission infrastructure but does set the rules for a robust and independent planning process. As such it is not the role of Government to undertake any assessment of alternatives to the locations chosen by the National Grid Electricity System Operator (ESO) or transmission operators and developers. Individual developers must demonstrate how their proposal meets nationally set criteria and has fairly considered alternatives.

As new infrastructure is proposed, developers must consider the impacts of offshore infrastructure in terms of its cost, environmental and marine user impact in the same manner as they consider onshore infrastructure. The lifetime cost for offshore cabling, as well as high maintenance costs and environmental impacts to the seabed, means that the presumption for new energy transmission infrastructure projects remains onshore. This cost is borne by electricity bill payers and must be considered when designing network infrastructure, as well as environmental and community impacts.

The UK remains at the forefront of offshore wind development globally thanks in part to its reputation as a fantastic place to do business. Connection contracts are private commercial contracts between the developers and ESO, and the government has no power to make retrospective changes. Any attempt to do so would risk investor confidence, delay the delivery of power to the grid and impact our energy security and climate ambitions.

Where onshore transmission infrastructure is required, efforts continue to be made to reduce its impacts and ensure communities are treated fairly. For example, in sensitive areas such as AONBs and National Parks the presumption remains that any transmission cables which cannot avoid these areas is undergrounded. All projects are required to progress through the robust planning process which includes statutory consultations and

proposals are independently reviewed. As ever, planning decisions can be challenged in court with sufficient grounds.

Given the role of the Secretary of State in determining Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project applications for development consent, the Department cannot comment on specific concerns regarding a proposed infrastructure project to avoid prejudicing any ultimate planning decision.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

Adedoyin Oke
DESNZ CORRESPONDENCE UNIT